

Message Text

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53

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
----- 017480

O R 211700 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO STCSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4176

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY SANAA

S E C R E T JIDDA 2573

EXDIS

DHAHRAN FOR CHUSMTM

DEPT PASS USCINCEUR AND SECDEF FOR ISA

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, YE, SA

SUBJECT: MINISTER OF DEFENSE SULTAN DECIDES SEND EMERGENCY ARMS TO
YAR

REF: JIDDA 2439

SUMMARY: MODA PRINCE SULTAN TOLD AMB JUNE 20 THAT HE HAD
APPROVE AND FORWARDED TO KING PROPOSAL FOR ARMS SUPPLY THAT
WOULD COVER ABOUT 80 PERCENT OF ITEMS URGENTLY REQUESTED BY
YAR. SULTAN EXPECTS PROMPT ROYAL APPROVAL
AND BELIEVES
ARMS SHOULD BE ON THEIR WAY WITHIN FORTNIGHT. SULTAN ADDED
THAT OVERALL PLAN FOR STRENGTHENING YAR DEFENSES ALMOST COMPLETE;
COSTS OF PROPOSALS FOR YAR ARMY AND AIRFOCE TOTAL AROUND \$276
MILLION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR NAVAL PROGRAM ARE IN FINAL STAGES.
SULTAN IS INTERESTED IN EXTENT TO WHICH USG PREPARED TO UNDER-
WRITE COSTS OF SUCM MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS ASSISTANCE TO YAR.
AMB CONGRATULATED PRINCE ON DECISION TO MOVE AHEAD WITH
EMERGENCY AID FOR YEMEN; WITH REGARD TO LONG RANGE PLAN FOR
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MILITARY ASSISTANCE, EMBASSY AND USMTM WOULD SEEK WASHINGTON
GUIDANCE IN ORDER PROVIDE PRINCE APPROPRIATE COMMENTS.

1. DURING MEETING JUNE 20 WITH PRINCE SULTAN, AMB BROUGHT UP
SUBJECT OF ARMS FOR YEMEN STATING US CONVICTION THAT YAR NOW

FACING CRITICAL THREAT FROM PDRY. IRYANI GOVERNMENT DOING EVERYTHING IT COULD TO COMBAT SUBVERSION AND INFILTRATION BUT FOUND ITSELF BADLY HANDICAPPED BY LACK OF WEAPONS. WE CONVINCED NORTH YEMEN'S NEED WAS REAL ONE. WE HOPED URGENTLY SAUDI ARABIA WOULD MOVE PROVIDE IN NEAR FUTURE EQUIPMENT WHICH WOULD GIVE YAR WHEREWITHAL FOR SELF- DEFENSE WHILE STRENGTHENING ITS CONFIDENCE THROUGH AWARENESS OF SOLID SAUDI BACKING.

2. SULTAN REPLIED THAT SAUDI ARABIA WAS NOW DETERMINED IT MUST ASSIT AND PROTECT YAR. ACCORDINGLY, SULTAN HAS PREPARED PROPOSAL BY WHICH HE SAYS SAUDI ARABIA WILL SUPPLY SOMETHING LIKE 80 PERCENT OF EQUIPMENT ITEMS MENTIONED IN YAR CHIEF OF STAFF'S LETTER (REFTEL) BROUGHT TO JIDDA IN EARLY JUNE BY YEMENI FONMIN NU' MAN. SULTAN TPN REELED OFF LONG LIST OF DETAILS INDICATING DEGREE AND MANNER OF SAUDI RESPONSE TO YAR REQUEST. FROM THIS DESCRIPTION, IT SEEMS SAUDIS PLAN PARE DOWN YEMENI DEMANDS CONSIDERABLY. FOR EXAMPLE, SAG WILL RESPOND WITH SOMETHING LIKE ONE- HALF THE NUMBER OF RIFLES REQUESTED BY YAR: PERHAPS ONLY ONE- FIFTH OF THE AMOUNT OF RIFLE AMMUNITION. YEMENIS HAD ASKED FOR 100 50- CALIBER MACHINE GUNS WITH AMMUNITION AND 100 BAZOOKAS. THEY WILL GET 20 MACHINE GUNDS AND 25 BAZOOKAS. OUT OF REQUEST FOR 18 106 MM. RECOILLESS RIFLES, THEY WILL OBTAIN 6; 10 RATHER THAN 20 75 MM. RECOILLESS ANTI- TANK GUNS, ETC; 600 RATHER THAN 1000 TENTS, THOUGH APPARENTLY SAUDIS INTENT IS LARGELY TO MEET YEMENI REQUEST FOR TRANSPORT AND TRUCKS. YEMENIS ASKED FOR TWO DAKOTAS BUT SULTAN SAID ONE WAS GIVEN A YEAR OR SO AGO AND SAUDIS CAN NOW ONLY SPARE ONE MORE. SPARE PARTS AND MAINTENANCE CREWS FOR VARIOUS PIECES OF EQUIPMENT WILL ALSO BE SENT.

3. SULTAN JUSTIFIED PARING DOWN PROCESS AS NECESSARY FOR PROPER CONSERVATION OF MATERIAL. HE CLAIMED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT TO DATE SAUDIS HAVE " CRAMMED" YEMENIS WITH SOME 20,000 RIFLES AND LARGE QUANTITIES OF AMMUNITION AND CANNOT IMAGINE WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THEM ALL. THUS IT IS SAUDIS' BELIEF THAT DELIVERY AT THIS TIME OF ALL YAR REQUEST MIGHT WELL LEAD TO EXTRAVAGENCE, LOSS AND WASTAGE BY YAR FORCES. IN SOME CASES, SAUDI MILITARY DOES NOT POSSESS AMOUNTS SOUGHT BY YEMEN. PRINCE DECLARED HE EXPECTED
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KING WOULD THAT EVENING APPROVE LIST OF EQUIPMENT AND THAT ALL OF IT WOULD BE " ON BOATS HEADED FOR YEMEN" WITHIN NEXT TWO WEEKS.

4. WITH REGARD TO ITEMS BEING SENT YAR, SULTAN REMARKED THAT IN A NUMBER OF INSTANVAS REPLACEMENTS MIGHT NOT BE REQUIRED AND THAT AT MOMENT HE COULD SEE NO NEED FOR AIR SHIPMENT OF ANY REPLACEMENTS ITEMS. I WARMLY CONGRATULATED PRINCE ON WISDOM OF HIS DECISON TO MOVE AHEAD WITH EMERGENCY AID FOR YEMEN.

TOLD SULTAN WE WOULD OF COURSE LEAVE IT TO HIM INFORM YARG OF SAUDI DECISION PROVIDE SHORT TERM LIGHT ARMS AND TRUCK PACKAGE THROUGH APPROPRIATE SAUDI CHANNELS.

5. PRINCE THEN WENT ON TO DISCUSS LONGER RANGE OVERALL PLAN FOR STRENGTHENING YAR DEFENSES. ARMY PROGRAM PREPARED WITH ASSISTANCE OF USMTM WAS COMPLETE AND HE PRESENTED ME WITH ARABIC SUMMARY.

SIMILARLY, PROPOSED AIR FORCE PROGRAM WHICH PROJECTS YEMENI ACQUISITION OF SOME 20 F-5 'S HAS ABOUT BEEN PREPARED ENVISIONING TRAINING FOR PILOTS AND CREWS EITHER IN SAUDI ARABIA OR US. ARMY AND AIR FORCE PROPOSALS TOGETHER TOTAL SOME-THING LIKE 276 MILLION DOLLARS. SUGGESTIONS FOR YAR NAVAL PROGRAM ARE IN FINAL STAGES OF COMPLETION.

6. SULTAN SAID THAT WHAT HE WOULD LIKE TO DO IS TO PRESENT THE PLAN FOR APPROVAL TO KING FAISAL WITH ASSERTION THAT HAD FULL APPROVAL AND SUPPORT OF USG. SULTAN ALSO WAS INTERESTED IN DEGREE TO WHICH USG MIGHT ASSIST IN FUNDING THE OVERALL PLAN FOR STRENGTHENING OF YAR'S ARMED FORCES. WOULD US COVER HALF OF EXPENSES WITH REMAINDER TO BE BORNE BY SAG OR WOULD WE FAVOR DIVIDING COSTS IN THIRDS, WITH SAG, YAR, AND US EACH TO CONTRIBUTE EQUALLY?

7. TOLD SUTLAN THAT WE WOULD EXAMINE PLAN CAREFULLY AND SEEK WASHINGTON VIEWS BUT THAT AT THIS STAGE I COULD NOT GIVE EVEN PRELIMINARY REACTION SINCE THIS WAS FIRST TIME COMPLETED PAPER HAD COME TO MY ATTENTION. HOWEVER, I THOUGHT USMTM WOULD IN NEAR FUTURE BE SENDING ME ENGLISH COPY. IN ANY CASE, EMBASSY AND USMTM WOULD AGAIN REVIEW MATTER CAREFULLY AND SEEK WASHINGTON GUIDANCE IN ORDER PROVIDE PRINCE APPROPRIATE COMMENTS.

8. COMMENT: SAUDI RESPONSE AS DESCRIBED BY SULTAN PROJECTS DELIVERIES WHICH SHOULD BE OF SUBSTANTIAL ASSISTANCE IN PROVIDING YAR WITH SINEWS TO COUNTER TERRORISM AND DETER CROSS BORDER STRIKES BY PDY. SULTAN'S SKEPTICISM REGARDING YAR FORCES' ABILITY TO MANAGE SUBSTANTIAL QUANTITIES OF MUNITIONS, WHETHER JUSTIFIED OR NOT, INDICATES CLEARLY SAG WILL BE WATCHING CAREFULLY TO SEE
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HOW EFFECTIVELY NORTH YEMENIS UTILIZE THESE WEAPONS. SINCE REACTION TIME OF SAUDI LOWER ECHELOS IS RARELY AS PROMPT AS TOP COMMAND MAY WISH, WE SUSPECT YEMENIS MUST BE A BIT MORE PATIENT STILL. IN ANY CASE, WE WILL FIND OPPORTUNITES KEEP TABS DISCREETLY ON PROGRESS OF DELIVERIES OVER NEXT FEW WEEKS.

9. IN ADDITION, EMBASSY AND USMTM WILL COMMENCE EARLY REVIEW PROJECTED PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT YAR ARMY AND AIR FORCE IN ORDER FORWARD TO WASHINGTON AT EARLIES POSSIBLE DATE OUR OPINIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

THACHER

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